The rise of social history has had a transforming influence on the history of early modern England. It has broadened the historical agenda to include many previously little-studied, or wholly neglected, dimensions of the English past. It has also provided a fuller context for understanding more established themes in the political, religious, economic and intellectual histories of the period. This volume serves two main purposes. Firstly it summarises, in an accessible way, the principal findings of forty years of research on English society in this period, providing a comprehensive overview of social and cultural change in an era vital to the development of English social identities. Secondly, the chapters, by leading experts, also stimulate fresh thinking by not only taking stock of current knowledge, but extending it, identifying problems, proposing fresh interpretations and pointing to unexplored possibilities. It will be essential reading for students, teachers and general readers.

Keith Wrightson is Randolph W. Townsend Jr Professor of History at Yale University. He previously held positions at the Universities of St Andrews and Cambridge, where he was Professor of Social History. His publications include the ground-breaking English Society, 1580–1680 (1982), Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain (2000) and Ralph Tailor’s Summer: A Scrivener, His City and the Plague (2011), as well as many essays on the social history of early modern England. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, a former President of the North American Conference on British Studies, and an Honorary Vice-President of the Social History Society.
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The map in Chapter 8 (Figure 8.2) is reproduced from C. Phythian-Adams, Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), xvii (© C. Phythian-Adams 1996). It is used here by kind permission of Bloomsbury Publishing plc.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Christopher W. Brooks, an outstanding historian of this period and a friend to many of us.
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AHR</td>
<td>American Historical Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
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<td>C&amp;C</td>
<td>Continuity and Change</td>
</tr>
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<td>DUL</td>
<td>Durham University Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>EcHR</td>
<td>Economic History Review</td>
</tr>
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<td>Early English Books Online</td>
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<td>HWJ</td>
<td>History Workshop Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRSH</td>
<td>International Review of Social History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBS</td>
<td>Journal of British Studies</td>
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<td>Journal of Family History</td>
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<td>Journal of Modern History</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRO</td>
<td>Norfolk Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODNB</td>
<td>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</td>
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<td>Past &amp; Present</td>
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